

ZUBAIDA ULA. How can I protest if the Shepards want McKinney dead? I just can't interfere in that. But on a personal level, I knew Aaron in grade school. We never called him Aaron. He was called A.J. ... How can we put A.J. McKinney — how can we put A.J. McKinney to death?

FATHER ROGER SCHMIT. I think right now our most important teachers must be Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney. They have to be our teachers. How did you learn? What did we as a society do to teach you that? See, I don't know if many people will let them be their teacher. I think it would be wonderful if the judge said, "In addition to your sentence, you must tell your story, you must tell your story."

BAILIFF. All rise. State of Wyoming vs. Aaron James McKinney docket # 6381. The Honorable Barton R. Voigt presiding. The court is in session.

#### MOMENT: AARON MCKINNEY

NARRATOR. During the trial of Aaron McKinney, the prosecution played a taped recording of his confession.

ROB DEBREE. My name is Rob DeBree, sergeant for the Sheriff's Office. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and may be used against you in a court of law.

NARRATOR. The following is an excerpt of that confession.

ROB DEBREE. Okay, so you guys, you and Russ go to the Fireside. So you're at the Fireside by yourselves, right?

AARON MCKINNEY. Yeah.

ROB DEBREE. Okay, where do you go after you leave the Fireside?

AARON MCKINNEY. Some kid wanted a ride home.

ROB DEBREE. What's he look like?

AARON MCKINNEY. Mmm, like a queer. Such a queer dude.

ROB DEBREE. He looks like a queer?

AARON MCKINNEY. Yeah, like a fag, you know?

ROB DEBREE. Okay. How did you meet him?

AARON MCKINNEY

AARON MCKINNEY. He wanted a ride home and I just thought, well, the dude's drunk, let's just take him home.  
ROB DEBREE. When did you and Russ talk about jacking him up?

AARON MCKINNEY. We kinda talked about it at the bar.

ROB DEBREE. Okay, what happened next?

AARON MCKINNEY. We drove him out past Walmart. We got over there, and he starts grabbing my leg and grabbing my genitals. I was like, "Look, I'm not a fuckin' faggot. If you touch me again, you're gonna get it." I don't know what the hell he was trying to do, but I beat him up pretty bad. Think I killed him.

ROB DEBREE. What'd you beat him with?

AARON MCKINNEY. Blacked out. My fist. My pistol. The butt of the gun. Wondering what happened to me. I had a few beers and I don't know. It's like I could see what was going on but I don't know, it was like somebody else was doing it.

ROB DEBREE. What was the first thing that he said or that he did in the truck that made you hit him?

AARON MCKINNEY. Well, he put his hand on my leg, slid his hand like as if he was going to grab my balls.

FINISH

#### MOMENT: GAY PANIC

ZACKIE SALMON. When that defense team argued that McKinney did what he did because Matthew made a pass at him ... I just wanted to vomit because that's like saying that it's okay. It's like the Twinkie Defense, when the guy killed Harvey Milk and Moscone. It's the same thing.

REBECCA HILLIKER. As much as, uh, part of me didn't want the defense of them saying that it was a gay bashing or that it was gay panic, part of me is really grateful. Because I was really scared that in the trial they were going to try and say that it was a robbery, or it was about drugs. So when they used "gay panic" as their defense, I felt this is good, if nothing else the truth is going to be told ... the truth is coming out.